

JANUARY, 1923

*The Ku Klux Klan has changed its purpose. This secret society is trying to control the courts, the legislatures, the government at Washington. This article is the first in a series of documentary exposures*

# The New Threat of the KU KLUX KLAN

By Norman Hapgood

THE KU KLUX KLAN has recently created a new division. It is more secret than the rest of the Klan, and it is of special political importance.

The Ku Klux Klan is thus taking a still more dangerous direction. The purpose of this article, and those that follow, is to show the machinery being developed to control secretly the acts of judges, grand juries, prosecuting attorneys, legislators, and executives.

If this be a fact—and we expect to prove it—it is obviously important. Our courts and our legislatures are supposed to be free. They are supposed to be open to public opinion and to take order from no secret group. If a district attorney swears allegiance and blind obedience to the chiefs of a mysterious political organization, what is to happen to confidence in such an official? What of ordinary jurors, of members of grand juries, that are subject to the same binding oath?

That the Klan has begun to have its candidates for public office is known. That it has recently organized a special department for the politicians, judges, and other prominent citizens who join it is not understood, and is the most important of all its developments.

The name of this new and doubly secret branch, to keep the light from office-holding and specially prominent members, is the Imperial Klan.

THE PHOTOGRAPH which we give on page nine presents a lodge of this inside political branch.

Readers will have noticed, in reading of the election of last November, and the primaries preceding them, that certain candidates were described as Klan or anti-Klan. No reader, however, we daresay, quite realizes the deep plans of the Klan toward nation-wide control, and the extensive steps that are being taken toward making this government a government by a secret society. If we make clear the extent to which political foundations have been laid by the Klan in the last two years, and the branches of government it undertakes to control, we shall not need to do much arguing.

The purpose of this series is to invite attention to this new political growth. It is not to go over the Klan as a whole. With the personal controversies that have rent the Klan we have nothing to do. They have been more than enough discussed. Nor shall we lay much stress on the religious controversies carried on by the Klan. We ourselves regret emphasis on religious divisions, and particularly bitterness that comes from the conflict of creeds, but the subject is apart, and extends endlessly. The topic with which our exposure deals is not religious. It is simple. It is this: shall our government, judicial, executive, and legislative, be secret?

Doubtless our readers are aware that the new organization has nothing to do with the famous Ku Klux Klan of reconstruction days. The present organization took that name for purposes of its own. We need, in this narrative, pay little attention

to the negro. The word "white" is put into the manifestoes of the present Klan for effect. There is nothing new on that subject.

The South after 1865 was placed in a terrible position by the foolish reconstruction policy of the North. Against the wishes expressed before his death by Lincoln, the negroes were rushed without preparation into the suffrage and into political office, backed by carpetbaggers and bayonets from the North. In these dire circumstances the original Ku Klux Klan, a picturesque organization for alarming the negroes, is easy to understand. It may even have been a wise move. The South settled its negro problem in its own way, and the Klan went out of existence.

When the present organization came into existence, it had little in common with the society of reconstruction days except the name and the grotesque language and ceremonies. To be sure, the negro, whom the best elements in the South had been trying to handle tactfully and according to forms of law, has been cast into new terror, but he is not the real person aimed at. Every intelligent Southerner knows that the hard problem of color is being worked out on a higher plane than mysterious fright.

Undoubtedly what we are about to picture is a product of the World War. That war left us more ready to throw off civilization whenever there is an excuse, to go about baiting any element that could be singled out as a target for mob psychology. It is easier to unchain the brute in man than to continue the upward climb.

To get the force and meaning of this new political division, it is necessary to know two or three things about the whole Klan organization. We should understand the binding nature of its oath, the general idea of secrecy, and the rapidity of the growth in numbers.

In general, a Klansman, even of the ordinary class, is expected to deny, or evade admitting, his membership. This is made easier for him by an elaborate distinction between the Klan and the Invisible Empire. His technical title is citizen of the Invisible Empire. Therefore, if he is asked if he belongs to the Ku Klux Klan, he feels justified in saying no. This privilege becomes important if the question is asked to determine a man's fitness to serve on a jury or to hold a particular office.

The judges, district attorneys, elected executives, and legislators in this especially secret and protected group take the same oath as the other members of the Klan. It reads:

"IN ADDITION to my oath of allegiance to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, I do here and now on my honor and integrity as a man and as an intelligent citizen pledge, promise and swear an undying and constant allegiance to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Imperial Wizard thereof, and the administrative forces under his direction. I pledge, promise and swear an unqualified allegiance and obedience to the Imperial Authority of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in my loyalty and faithfulness to the purpose of our cause. AMEN."

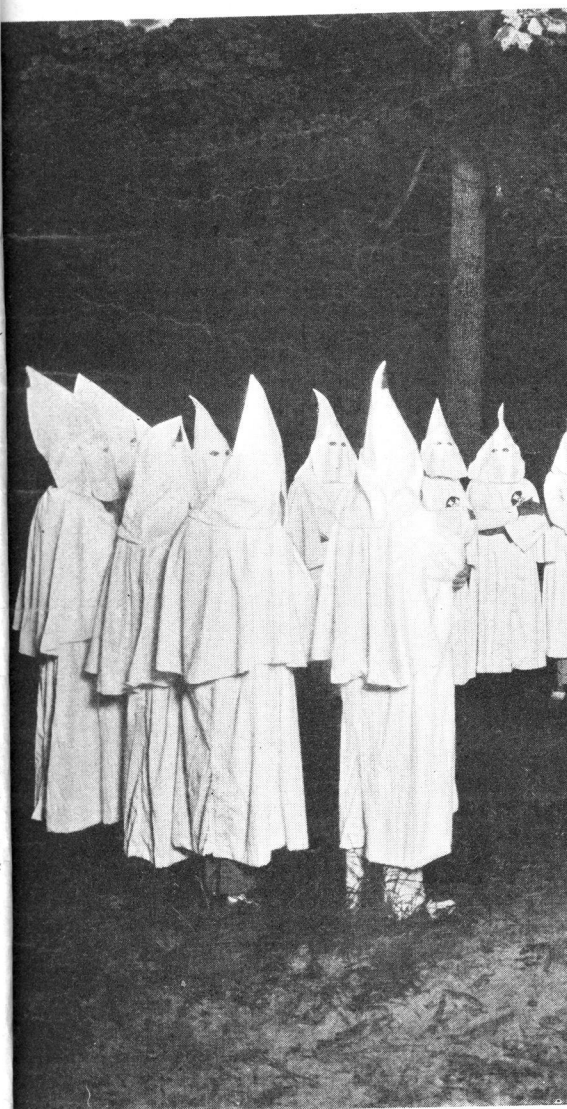
How are politicians, judges, and similar exercisers of power

be led to wish to join? The answer lies in the voting of the Klan, and in its general ability to use political and force. Numbers, therefore, became the basis of its effort. At the very moment that politics became its goal. Ten dollar entrance fee furnishes the funds, and this fund is again put out for further numbers. Nothing could show more clearly the utter difference between this society and the one from which it took its name. In the original society numbers were of no importance, nor was money.

Let us look at the success of the present drive for numbers. It is not possible to give more than suggestive illustration. The big drive in the South is shrouded in mystery. The big drive in the South and political power began about two and a half years ago. The new Klan was founded during the war, in 1915. By the 1st, 1920, it had less than 5,000 members. Today there are Klan organizations in every state in the Union. E. J. Clarke, the chief organizer of the drive, said on June 6th that the society was growing at the rate of 10,000 a month. At Dallas, the Klan was said at that time to have 10,000 to 20,000 members. Texas is one of the strongest of Klanism and the elections of this past fall turned out accordingly. The spread is all over the country, but we will not dwell on certain high spots. Let us take first the seat of national government. If the Klan can carry out its plan to dictate to Congress and to the Administration. It is of the confidential reports to officials:

"June 6th, 1922.

The City of Washington is making rapid strides in Klanism. A distinguished feature is the fact that among the members of some of the nation's most prominent men in the nation's life are profound believers in the principles of true Americanism.



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Let us look at the success of the present drive for numbers. It is not possible to give more than suggestive illustration, as of course everything is shrouded in mystery. The big drive for members and political power began about two and a half years ago. The new Klan was founded during the war, in 1915. On June 1st, 1920, it had less than 5,000 members. Today there are Klan organizations in every state in the Union. Edward Young Clarke, the chief organizer of the drive, said on August 12th that the society was growing at the rate of 10,000 a week. At Dallas, the Klan was said at that time to have from 15,000 to 20,000 members. Texas is one of the strongest states in Klanism and the elections of this past fall turned on that issue. The spread is all over the country, but we will touch only certain high spots. Let us take first the seat of our national government. If the Klan can carry out its plans there it will dictate to Congress and to the Administration. Here is one of the confidential reports to officials:

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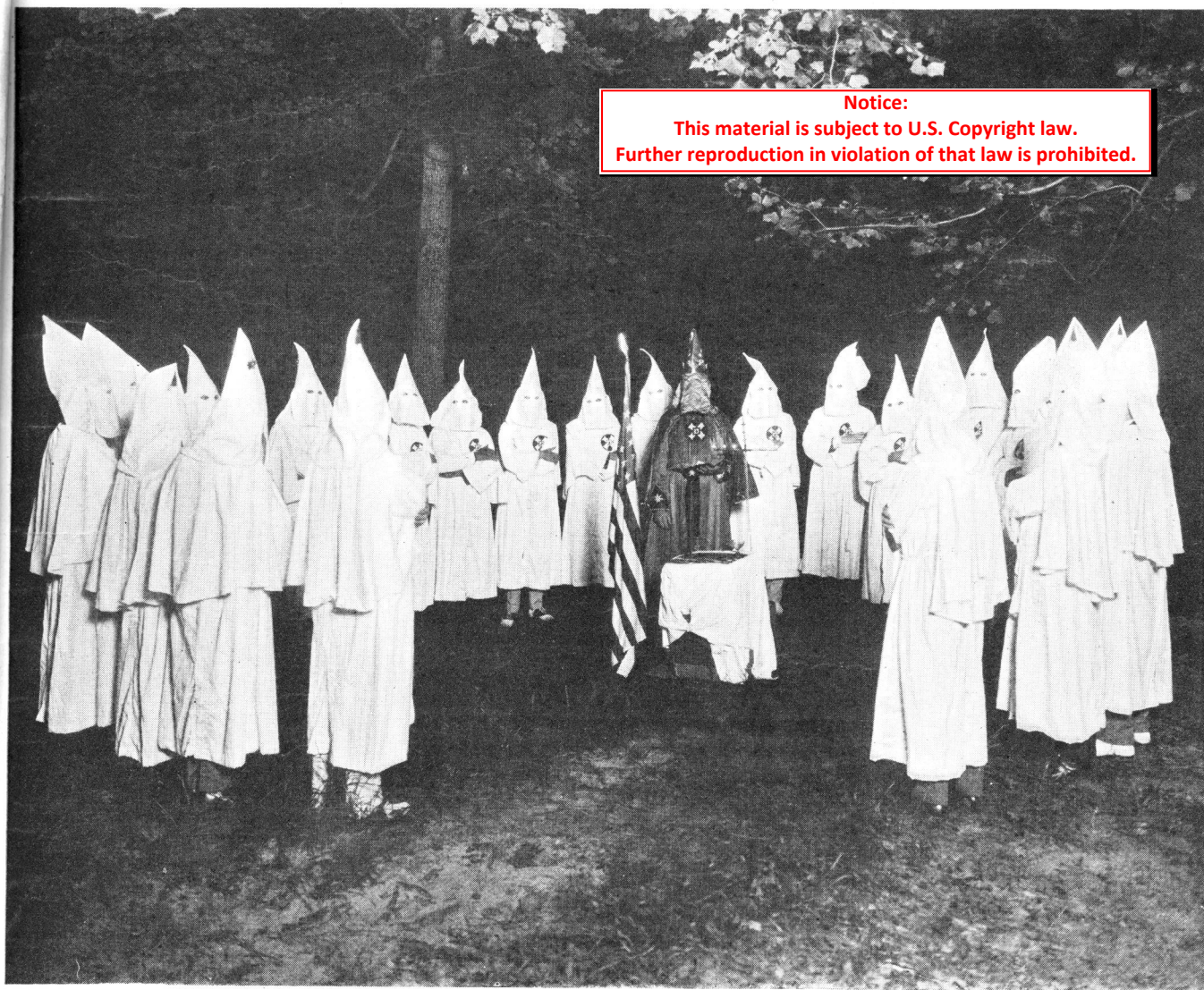
taught and exemplified by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. At this time three Klans are being organized there under the direction of King Kleagle, S. F. Poindexter, one of which is shortly to be given its charter. This organization will receive its official recognition from the Imperial Palace with more than 1,000 members among whom are men high up in national affairs and whose names are known to probably every man, woman and child in this country."

I IN THIS outburst of political ambition Washington naturally is the pinnacle. We shall return to that city with graphic details next month. But there are other interesting branchings out. Within the last two years the Klan has organized in New York City. There its plan is not to try any rough work until it is strong. Numbers first—force later. It will proceed with some caution. Indeed any rough work in that city in the present distribution of power and state of public opinion would be unsafe. But the work progresses. The present King Kleagle of New York City is E. D. Smith. He is the chief organizer and representative of the Imperial Wizard in that city.

In a talk by Edward Young Clarke to his business associates and employees concerning his organization trip to New York City, there was this statement with reference to "naturalization," which is the term used instead of "initiation":

"When Mr. Clarke got over to the meeting place he found 142 there waiting to take the oath. They put through 100. Among these were the Chief of Police of the Marine Corps of New York, Four Captains of Police, one of them the first Captain to Commissioner Enright, five of the big newspapermen of New York, and many other notables. Mr. Clarke's remark was that he had never struck an audience anywhere that had as much enthusiasm as that New York crowd had."

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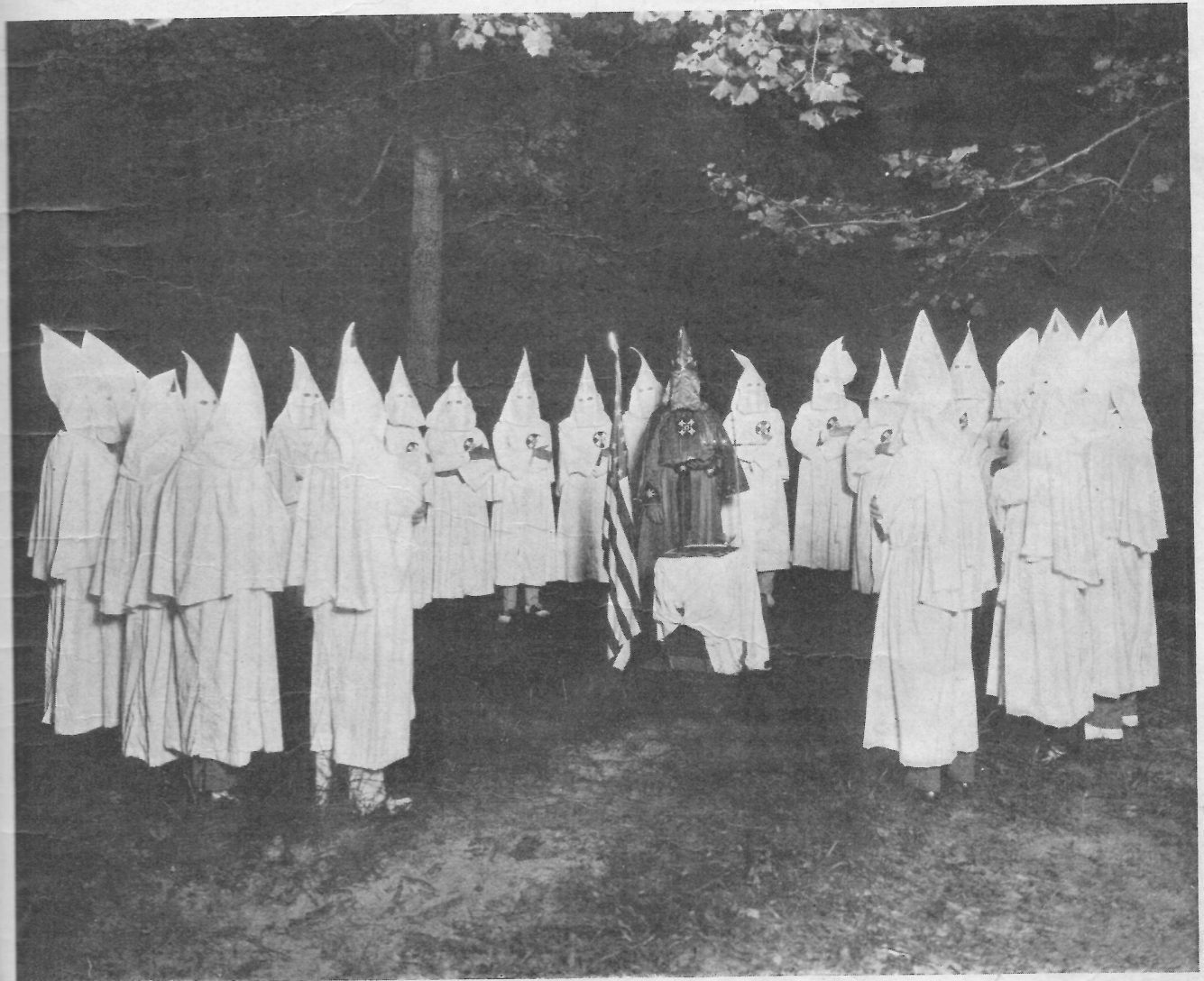
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"THE MOST SUBLIME LINEAGE IN ALL HISTORY  
COMMEMORATING AND PERPETUATING AS IT DOES  
THE MOST DAUNTLESS ORGANIZATION  
KNOWN TO MAN."

Imperial Palace  
Invisible Empire

Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
INCORPORATED  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PROPAGATION



DATED AT New York City, March 9th, 1922.

SEND REPLY TO % Wilson D. Bush, N.Y. City.

Mr. J. O. Wood, Editor,  
THE SEARCHLIGHT,  
Atlanta, Ga.

My faithful Klansman:

King KlEagle Whitney, of Mass., says to you "hot dog" and greetings and best wishes. If you are not mad at me for my former letter regarding the hootch still and the dropsey cure, I would like to ask that you take your pen in hand and write an editorial or news item about the book written by Lothrop Stoddard, THE RISING TIDE OF COLOR.

Any white man that reads this book will have the fear of God put into him over the race question. Every Klansman should read it and be able to quote the high spots. If you have not read it, get Dr. Mahoney to dash off an article for you. Do not mention the fact that Stoddard is a Klansman, but give him a good boost. Pres. Harding speaks highly of the book, and a new one is in process of making, which will also be a good klan argument. Now Joseph, get thyself busy and lets see a good snappy article on this book. If you are good to me, and follow my suggestions, when they are worthy, I will sit down someday and write you a nice long story of my life, which you can print in the SEARCHLIGHT. IT would be the making of your paper, overnight your circulation would jump to millions, so bear this in mind.

Yours in the sacred unfailing bond,

*D. F. Webster*

**C** This letter, written by a member of the New York branch of the Ku Klux Klan to the Editor of The Searchlight, the Klan's official newspaper, is an indication of quality in the membership of the Klan.

In a report to officers dated March 4th, 1921, reference was made to Mr. Clarke's trip to New York City, in part as follows:

"And before Mr. Clarke returned to Atlanta the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, in deed and in fact, HAD entered into and become established in the home town of Mayor Hylan, who said there was no room for it there, and of former Assistant District Attorney Talley, who 'dared' it to show its head."

"... Let it suffice to say that the Ku Klux Klan has been placed solidly on its own feet in New York City: that it actively starts work with a membership which includes some of the most

prominent men in that great city—merchants, manufacturers, bankers, city officials, preachers, and many other men not blessed with such social, financial, political prominence, just plain, hard-working, earnest, 100 percent American citizens."

The report concludes with the statement:

"We are very much on our way in the city we were dared to invade."

The membership in New York City last October was about 10,000. This does not include Brooklyn. Quality and power of membership are counted on as confidently as increasing

numbers. As early as March 25, 1921, there was confidential statement:

"It is with a great deal of satisfaction that we announce this week that we now include among our number of the editors of one of the best known and most widely circulated periodicals in the country. He not only has come into the organization but he already has gone actively to work to some of the things for which this organization stands. The following extract from his letter will show:

"New York—Now that I have had the great pleasure of attending two meetings and receiving full naturalization to tell you of my gratitude and supreme satisfaction united in Klansmanship with you. I shall not be idle as permitted, and in the most discreet manner, I am at once in work that seems very needful, viz.: opposing the passage by New York and New Jersey legislatures of laws designed to hamper the work of the organization in states, also in gathering the men of my home localities into a Klan before any adverse legislation can be put on us!"

While Washington and New York stand first in influence, we must not overlook the fact that this organization is national in its scope.

Chicago, the second city in the country in size, is a seat of great activity. The Klan was an issue in the Illinois primaries and elections. The Klan used advertising as a method of getting members and attracting critics and opponents, thus spending a good deal of money.

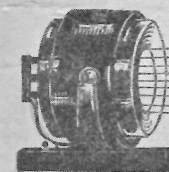
Oregon seems to lead the Northwest, with Portland at the head, but here are sample reports from two other states:

"Reports from Montana and Wyoming show the Ku Klux Klan is gathering members in even the most remote townships and villages. A recent letter from the King KlEagle of Montana shows that in a small town of less than a thousand people a Klan was chartered in January with 125 members. At the same time the membership has more than doubled. This is by reason of the fact that this village is located fifty miles from the nearest railroad.

Both Montana and Wyoming have increased the Klan so rapidly within the last few weeks that both states have declared Realms with their own state organizations. Practically every city and town has been organized."

IN ESTIMATING the growth we must probably take into account not only the parent organization but its offshoots. A number of organizations for women they are not mentioned by Klansmen if not officially by the Klan. The women's organizations is:

W. A. P. Study Club (White American Protestant Study Club) is supposed to be secret. E. F. Keith, a wealthy oil man of Claremore, Oklahoma, a Klansman, started this club has been organized in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas. It now has a membership of approximately 10,000 although it was only started last May. One of the



THE SEARCHLIGHT

NOT A MOULDER BUT A MOLDER  
ENDORSED AS OFFICIAL ORGAN JUNIOR ORDER OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

Volume 3, Number 40

THE SEARCHLIGHT

Klan Declaration  
Radio

**C** The Searchlight, the official organ of the Klan, which most of the Klan's propaganda is published in.





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W. A. P. Study Club (White American Protestant, which title is supposed to be secret). E. F. Keith, a wealthy oil promoter of Claremore, Oklahoma, a Klansman, started this club. This club has been organized in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kansas. It now has a membership of approximately 12,000, although it was only started last May. One of the application

blanks, and a copy of the oath, which of course is considered secret, is in our possession. One paragraph is as follows:

"I furthermore promise that I will never, while acting on any board or filling any office of trust, place any person, not an American born white protestant, as teacher, governess, dictator, or instructor over the children of a member of this organization, nor will I knowingly vote for any other person for such position, who will."

Other similar organizations are: Order of American Women, located in Texas; Order of Protestant Women, in Texas and Oklahoma; Ladies of the Invisible Empire, located in Oregon.

On October 13th, 1922, in Portland, Oregon, according to the Searchlight, official organ of the Klan, there was "an initiation of more than one thousand women into the Ladies of the Invisible Empire." The notice went on: "This is indication of the Klan spirit, which is sweeping Oregon like a tidal wave." It then showed its immediate purpose. This sweeping Klan spirit, it said, presaged "an overwhelming victory for a compulsory public school bill and the defeat of un-American candidates for office."

THE questions to be answered by any woman who wishes to join the W. A. P., after her name, age, and address, are:

Are you married?  
Where was your husband born?  
What is your husband's business?  
Are you a church member? What church?  
What was your mother's church?  
Father's?  
What is the church of your husband's mother?  
What is the church of your husband's father?

When an "alien," as all non-Klansmen are known to "citizens of the Invisible Empire," applies for membership and goes before the fiery cross to take the oath of allegiance as a Klansman, he takes an obligation administered to him with great pomp and mystery by four fully robed officers of the Invisible Empire. One gives him the section entitled "Obedience," another "Secrecy," the third "Fidelity," and the fourth "Klanishness."

He is then instructed as to the meaning of his obligation. Led before the Exalted Cyclops, he is asked in solemn tones:

"Sir, have you assumed without mental reservation your oath of allegiance to the Invisible Empire?"

Upon the new Klansman answering in the affirmative the Exalted Cyclops utters the following warning:

"Mortal man cannot assume a more binding oath; character and courage alone will enable you to keep it. Always remember that to keep this oath means to you honor, happiness and life; but to violate it means disgrace, dishonor and DEATH. May honor and life be yours."

Later the Klansman is given an informal interpretation of his oath and the meaning of the Exalted Cyclops's question as to whether he has assumed it "without mental reservation." An officer of the Klan tells him in substance:

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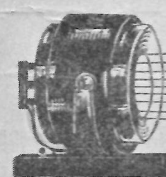
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## THE SEARCHLIGHT

NOT A MOULDER BUT A CHRONICLER OF PUBLIC OPINION

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ANYWHERE IN U. S. 5c

# Klan Declares War On Radical Forces In U. S.

The Searchlight, the official organ of the Ku Klux Klan, is the medium through which most of the Klan's propaganda dream of supremacy is sent forth.



"If you are asked the question in a court of law or by a citizen of the alien world, 'Are you a member of the Ku Klux Klan?' you may truly answer 'No.' You have taken the oath of allegiance to the Invisible Empire and you are therefore vested with the title of 'Klansman.' You are not a member of the Ku Klux Klan, but a citizen of the Invisible Empire to which you have sworn obedience and fidelity. As a Klansman you are on probation. Your conduct will be watched and you will be tested and tried to determine your fitness for the higher degrees which will make you a member of the Ku Klux Klan."

THESE "higher degrees" he is told are conferred or "communicated" for "special achievement" and not taken by candidates as in other secret orders.

When the new Klansman gets home from the "naturalization," if he thinks over the oath he has taken, he realizes that he has sworn to place his allegiance to the Invisible Empire above his allegiance to his government, has pledged himself to defy the laws of his state when the interests of his secret government are at stake, and to "obey" all orders, mandates and decrees issued by the Imperial Wizard whom he probably has never seen. And the penalty for violating his oath is "disgrace, dishonor and DEATH."

Under that section of his oath captioned "Obedience" he has sworn:

"I, (giving his name) in the presence of God and man most solemnly pledge, promise and swear, unconditionally, that I will faithfully obey the Constitution and laws, and will willingly conform to all regulations, usages and requirements, of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which do now exist or which may be hereafter enacted; and will render at all times loyal respect and steadfast support to the Imperial Authority of same, and will heartily heed all official mandates, decrees, edicts, rulings, and instructions of the Imperial Wizard thereof. I will yield prompt response to all summonses, I having knowledge of same, Providence alone preventing."

The Imperial Wizard, William Joseph Simmons, on July 11th, 1922, in a secret address to his Imperial officers, said:

"I cannot conceive of an oath, any kind of an oath, that is stronger and more binding than that of the allegiance to the Ku Klux Klan."

In an official document bearing the official seal with the signature of the Imperial Wizard and twelve of the other fifteen members of the Imperial Klonsilium, which is at present the Supreme Court of the organization, reference is made to the oath as follows:

"Men who have voluntarily assumed the oath must respect it. . . . No man is forced to assume our oath, but any man who voluntarily assumes and wilfully violates it shall pay the penalty attached to that violation. . . . When men on the inside, whether they speak as individuals or Klans, prove unworthy the honors we bestow and become a law unto themselves, failing to recognize and honor the constituted laws and authority of our organization, it becomes the sworn duty of the Klonsilium to deal with such men according to their kind. . . . This constitution must be respected and all edicts, decrees, mandates and rulings of the Imperial Wizard must be obeyed."

In a communication of November 25th, 1921, addressed "To All Faithful and Loyal Klansmen," signed by Edward Young Clarke, the Imperial Klaliff, I read:

"We are now at work on the new Mioak, a new password, a revised Oath and revised Kloran, and plans are also being perfected concerning the Second Order."

THE OLD password in use at the time he wrote this communication was "White Supremacy." The new word is "America Forever."

We have a complete copy of the proceedings of the first meeting held by the Imperial Klan, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, on Tuesday night, July 11th, 1922. The photograph on page nine was taken then, after the degree was conferred.

Lest anybody may think we are exaggerating the specific purpose of this sacrosanct political inner circle, let us state that on this particular occasion several of the members present discussed the merits of this new and higher degree, and Mr. Clarke, in favor of it, said:

" . . . I think it will give us an instrument very much needed for another purpose. We are face to face now with the opportunity

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of bringing into the organization men of large type, but men whose identity we want to absolutely conceal from even their local Klan—the Klan which is located where they live. For instance: Congressmen, Senators, Governors, Judges, and others whom we can line up as real Klansmen, but whom it would be best for them and for us for their identity to be completely and absolutely concealed. These men can be relied upon in the Imperial Klan, and put on the roster of the Imperial Klan and given the Imperial passport to enter their local Klan at any time it was thought best to let them go there and uncover their identity as Klansmen. I believe that this feature of the Imperial Klan's possibilities alone justifies its establishment at this time. . . . It will not be long before Klans in all parts of the nation will begin to send in petitions of various kinds to be discussed by the heads of the operating forces of the organization and the action taken will be passed down in full detail to all of the Klans throughout the nation. I think we have made a forward step and I am heartily in favor of it."

BEFORE administering the oath to these selected men of influence, the Imperial Wizard (Simmons) said:

" . . . If the oath is not right then don't take it. If it is right and you take it, then stand by it, or let the stars fall out of their sockets and the sun refuse to shine. We can't play with this thing. . . . I want them to stand by their oath or if not willing to stand by their oath to honorably make their bow, drop out and keep their mouths shut. . . .

It is a serious proposition, it is a call for manhood—for real men. . . . I will say this much in the very beginning: If the Imperial Klan fails, where in the name of our Great God are we going to get men to carry on this work? I say, where will we get them and how will we get them? . . .

I want all these members of this organization to form a line right around this altar. (They did so.) Now, boys, this is provisional tonight and it is informal. On that open book (pointing to a Bible) in the presence of that flag you will swear as you have sworn before. If you will swear, place your left hand over your heart and raise your right hand to heaven and repeat after me. Now, boys, don't do this if you can't stand by it. Be honest about this thing. If you can't, just don't do it. Now let's be honest about this, fellows. You will repeat after me:

"In addition to my oath of allegiance to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, I do here and now on my honor and integrity as a man and as an intelligent citizen pledge, promise and swear an undying and constant allegiance to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Imperial Wizard thereof, and the administrative forces under his direction. I pledge, promise and swear an unqualified allegiance and obedience to the Imperial Authority of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in my loyalty and faithfulness to the purpose of our cause. AMEN."

Boys, you will pass by in single file and kiss that book. (All present did so.) Fellows, by the Klansman's tie of fraternal love that binds us in no fear, no shape or kin to that above. Let the oath be finally sealed by a prayer by the Imperial Kludd."

AN illustration of quality in the membership of the Klan is given by the following letter written by a Klansman in New York to the Searchlight. The most important parts of the letter are:

"New York City, March 9th, 1922.  
Send reply to Wilson D. Bush, N. Y. City."

Mr. J. O. Wood, Editor,  
THE SEARCHLIGHT,  
Atlanta, Ga.

My faithful Klansman:

I would like to ask that you take your pen in hand and write an editorial or news item about the book written by Lothrop Stoddard, THE RISING TIDE OF COLOR.

Any white man that reads this book will have the fear of God put into him over the race question. Every Klansman should read it, and be able to quote the high spots. If you have not read it, get Dr. Mahoney to dash off an article for you. Do not mention the fact that Stoddard is a Klansman, but give him a good boost. Pres. Harding speaks highly of the book and a new one is in process of making, which will also be a good Klan argument. . . .

Yours in the sacred unailing bond,  
F. S. WEBSTER."

Next month we shall give specific examples with names and documents, of men in legislative and political life who are The end by the oath, and subject to the orders given by the 10,000, of me autocratic chiefs of the organization.



Next day they went up stream in a prau, space and freedom, and she seemed to enter.

# Before

## By W. S.

Illustr.

MRS. SKINNER liked to be ready in good time was dressed in black silk as befitted her age and the she wore for her son-in-law, and now she put on her to was a little uncertain about it, since the egret's feathers adorned it might very well arouse in some of the f would certainly meet at the party acid expostulation. it was dreadful to kill those beautiful wild birds, in t season, too, for the sake of their feathers; but there t so pretty and stylish, it would have been silly to rei and it would have hurt her son-in-law's feelings. He ha them all the way from Borneo and he expected her pleased with them. Kathleen had made herself rathe ant about them; she must wish she hadn't now, after happened, but Kathleen had never really liked Har Skinner, standing at her dressing-table, placed the too head, it was after all the only nice hat she had, and pin with a large jet knob through it. If anybody said to her about the ospreys she had her answer.

"I know it's dreadful," she would say, "and I would